

Message Text

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PAGE 01 QUITO 02336 111638Z
ACTION ARA-14

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 HA-05 MCT-01 AID-05 CIAE-00 PM-05
H-01 INR-10 L-03 NSAE-00 NSC-05 PA-01 SP-02
SS-15 ICA-11 PC-01 OPR-02 /082 W
-----083302 111721Z /70

P R 111515Z APR 78
FM AMEMBASSY QUITO
TO SECSTATE WASHDC PRIORITY 7890
INFO AMCONSUL GUAYAQUIL
AMEMBASSY LIMA
DIA WASHDC
USCINCSO QUARRY HEIGHTS CZ
24TH CONTW HOWARD AFB CZ/IN

C O N F I D E N T I A L QUITO 2336

E.O. 11652: GDS
TAGS: PORS, PINT, EC
SUBJECT: STUDENT VIOLENCE RESUMES

REF: (A) QUITO 2296; (B) QUITO 2013

1. STUDENT DEMONSTRATIONS AGAINST A RAISE IN BUS FARES
RESUMED FOR THE SECOND WEEK APRIL 10 FOLLOWING A LULL OVER
THE WEEKEND. CONTRARY TO EXPECTATIONS, STUDENTS, MOSTLY
AT THE SECONDARY LEVEL, USED THE WEEKEND TO ORGANIZE WHAT
WERE PERHAPS THE MOST SERIOUS OUTBURSTS TO DATE. MORE
ARRESTS AND INJURIES WERE REPORTED AND STUDENTS AND THE
PRESS HAVE PROTESTED WHAT THEY BELIEVE TO BE POLICE EXCESSES.
A POLICEMAN INJURED IN THE EARLY STAGES OF THE DISTURBANCES
DIED APRIL 10, PERHAPS CAUSING THE APPARENT HARDENING OF
THE POLICE ATTITUDE.

2. IN A SERIOUS STEP THE GOE MOVED TO CLOSE TWO OF QUITO'S
LARGEST SECONDARY SCHOOLS, USING TROOPS TO EVACUATE THE
BUILDINGS. IN AN EXPLANATORY STATEMENT, MINISTER OF
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EDUCATION GEN FERNANDO DOBRONSKY HINTED THAT IF
DISTURBANCES CONTINUE, THE CLOSURES COULD BE PERMANENT,
RESULTING IN THE LOSS OF THE SCHOOL YEAR FOR THE STUDENTS.
HE ALSO IMPLIED THAT THE CLOSURE OF CENTRAL UNIVERSITY
WAS A POSSIBILITY.

3. SPEAKING FOR THE GOE ON APRIL 10, SECRETARY GENERAL

OF ADMINISTRATION ADMIRAL VICTOR HUGO GARCES, INDICATED THAT THE GOVERNMENT WOULD CONTINUE ITS FIRMNESS IN THE FACE OF THE VIOLENCE AND THAT IT HAD NOT CONSIDERED REVOKING THE BUS FARE INCREASE. HE ALSO STATED THAT THE CURRENT PUBLIC ORDER SITUATION WOULD IN NO WAY MODIFY THE GOE'S PLAN TO RETURN THE COUNTRY TO CIVILIAN RULE.

4. COMMENT: THE RESUMPTION OF THE INCIDENTS AFTER A WEEKEND'S INTERVAL IS SURPRISING AND HAS MANY QUITENOS WRINGING THEIR HANDS. NEVERTHELESS WITH GUAYAQUIL SILENT AND WITH THE POLITICAL CANDIDATES (EXCEPT FOR THE PEKING-LINE CAMILO MENA) CHOOSING TO REMAIN ALOOF FROM THE PROBLEM, IT IS DIFFICULT TO SEE HOW LONG THE DISTURBANCES CAN PERPETUATE THEMSELVES OR HOW THEY CAN BE EXPLOITED TO INTERRUPT CIVIC PROCESSES FURTHER. GARCES' COMMENT CONCERNING THE ABSENCE OF A CONNECTION BETWEEN THE PUBLIC ORDER SITUATION AND THE RETORNO IS REASSURING, BUT IT ALSO RUNS COUNTER TO THE HINTS THAT MINISTER OF GOVERNMENT BOLIVAR JARRIN MADE A FEW WEEKS AGO (REF B).

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Message Attributes

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